

Approaches to current issues during the Olympic Games

The world is watching ...

All Olympic host nations are scrutinized closely. What will the issues be for Beijing? During the build up to the Olympic Games and while they are in progress, there will be many opportunities to explore current issues that arise. These issues may be about the Olympic Games themselves, but they are also likely to include wider issues about society, sport, and the responses and views of people and groups.

The following table summarizes some ideas about how to integrate learning through current issues. It includes links to a range of templates that can be adapted to suit news items of interest.

Approach	Focus and context
A Sorting out the news	A 'social inquiry' approach to the news – what are the ideas, values, and responses to this item of news.
B Views on the news	This approach would work well with articles that focus on people's viewpoints, opinions and values. (That is, what people think/believe is important.)
C Considering responses to the news	This approach would work well with a news item focusing on a social issue where people have made decisions or taken actions.
D Perspectives PMI	This approach would work for an issue where there are a number of viewpoints. Select a number of groups or individuals and complete a PMI on the issue. For example, a political party perspective or a lobby group perspective. You could include a student's perspective as well, for example, from NZ or from China.
E Analysing the news	This approach encourages critical thinking, media literacy, and the ability to look for bias in articles. Gather a number of articles to compare and analyse using the questions on the template. You may need to look at the distinction between facts and opinions before you do this.

Using current issues during the Olympic Games

Alongside your unit of work on the Olympic Games, consider some of the following approaches:

- a) Ask students to collect news items to bring in to school. Have a **weekly media focus** and review the stories of the week. Choose an item of news that holds students' interest and then select from the templates (1–5) provided to develop an approach that matches.
- b) Allocate students into '**news groups**'. Have them select themes of interest. Each group is then responsible for bringing in news stories about that theme. Give students a chance to select from the templates and develop their understandings together. Share group findings with the class.
- c) Set up a **scavenger hunt** for news. On a prepared sheet, describe different types of news. Give the students three weeks to collect news stories and then have them group and classify the stories under the different types of news. They could graph the different types of news in their categories.

Follow-up ideas:

- Role play of main groups/characters in a news story.
- Look for related stories in this context.
- Set up a debate about the main issues.
- Follow a particular story through time to see when it is reported and for how long.
- Consider what your responses could be as individuals, or as a class, to an issue in the news.

When exploring news items together with your students, consider the following key questions. Encourage the students to think critically and to develop knowledge about different perspectives.

Key questions:

- *Why is this news story being told?*
- *Who is in the story and who is not?*
- *Who do you identify with in the story? Why?*
- *What questions could you ask some of the people involved?*
- *What assumptions could be made from this story?*
- *What is the intention of this story?*
- *How are the claims substantiated?*

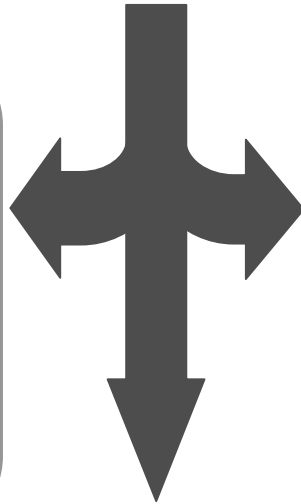
Sorting out the news

What is this news story/photo about?

Who	What	When	Where	Why

How does this affect people?

What will people do about it?



So what?
Why is this important to us?

Views on the news

In the speech bubbles, write down the viewpoints of a person/group in the news story, for example, "this affects me because ..."

Person/group 1

Person/group 2

Issue/news story/photo and caption

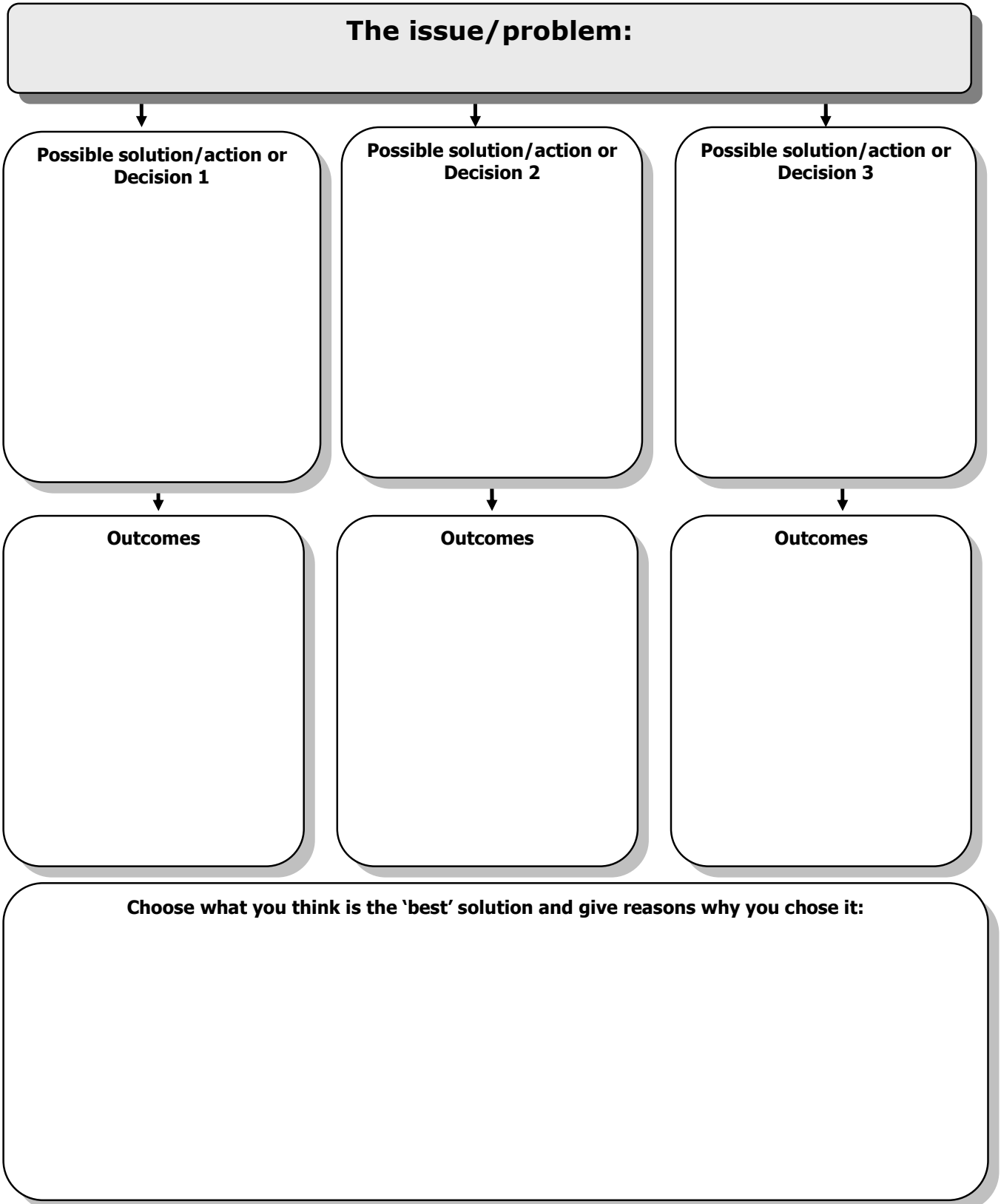
Person/group 3

Person/group 4

What do I think?

What could I do about it?

Considering responses to the news



Perspectives PMI

Select a number of groups or individuals with an opinion on the issue. In the boxes, outline what each group or individual see as positive or negative about the issue and what they think can be done to improve the situation.

Group/ individual	POSITIVE	MINUS	IMPROVEMENTS ie how will this person/group improve the idea/issue?

Analysing the news - how reliable is a text?

Gather a number of articles to compare and analyse using the following questions.

